

**Transportation and Air Quality Committee**  
*Kerry Armstrong, Acting Chair*

**Wednesday, February 10th, 2021**  
**10:30 a.m. – Noon**  
**Online Meeting**

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>
Mr. Kerry Armstrong	Commissioner Marcello Banes
Mayor Eric Dial	Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms
Mayor Rusty Paul	Commissioner Pat Graham
Commissioner Robb Pitts	Mr. Jeff Lewis
Commissioner Harry Johnston	Commissioner Kevin Little
Ms. Martha Martin	Mayor Rey Martinez
Mayor Mike Mason	Commissioner Paul Poole
Mr. Mark Mathews	CEO Michael Thurmond
Mr. Rich McDonald	Commissioner Jeff Turner
Mr. Paul Radford	Mr. Tread Davis
Mayor Vince Williams	Mayor Rochelle Robinson
Ms. Jannine Miller	Commissioner Carlotta Harrell
Commissioner Cindy Mills	
Commissioner Oz Nesbitt	
Commissioner Lisa Cupid	
Ms. Liane Levetan	
Mr. Greg Cantrell	
Commissioner Dave Carmichael	
Commissioner Gwen Flowers-Taylor	
Commissioner Romona Jackson Jones	
Mayor Eric Clarkson	
Mr. Jim Durrett	
Commissioner Nicole Love Hendrickson	

## **1. Welcome; Acceptance of January 13, 2021 meeting summary**

Kerry Armstrong, ARC Board Chairman, greeted the committee and welcomed them to the February TAQC meeting. He requested a motion from the committee to hold this meeting virtually. The committee moved, seconded, and voted to support the motion. He provided some general etiquette and guidelines for attending the virtual meeting. No comments or edits were received for the January 13, 2021, meeting summary. He introduced John Orr, ARC, to introduce public comments.

### **Public Comment Period**

There was no request for public comment.

## **2. Public Hearing and Overview of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #2 (FIRST READ)**

Chairman Armstrong introduced the first read of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment #2 and opened the public hearing.

John Orr, ARC, recognized Alyssa Cleveland for public comments on the TIP Amendment #2. Ms. Cleveland stated that she is concerned about pedestrian improvements along Fulton Industrial Boulevard near Camp Creek Parkway. She has spoken with many of her neighbors and observed travel along the corridor. She believes that there would be more pedestrian traffic if the safety and convenience of the corridor is improved with more traffic lights, crosswalks, sidewalks, and seating, especially at bus stops.

There were no more public comments.

John Orr introduced Jean Hee Barrett, ARC, to provide an overview of the TIP Amendment #2. She reviewed local and federal funding sources, the 2019 solicitation process and technical evaluation, the approval process in ARC and partner agencies, the previous TIP Amendment #1, and major changes in TIP Amendment #2. See presentation for specific details.

Ms. Barrett provided some details for a few projects in Amendment #2. She gave a brief overview of the SR 81 widening, the Metropolitan Parkway Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) route, and SR 139 / Mableton Parkway trail. Some other projects include I-75 commercial vehicle lanes, SR 316 grade separation, Villa Rica bypass, and SR 14 bridge upgrade. Finally, she gave a detailed explanation of several changes to the I-85 interchange at SR 42 (North Druid Hills Road).

Ms. Barrett announced that the next TIP solicitation process is likely to occur in Q4 2021. She advised local sponsors to begin reviewing plans and projects that may be eligible for federal transportation funding. She concluded with the TIP Amendment schedule and next steps. She reiterated that public comment period is open until Feb 11, 2021. The public hearing occurred on February 10, 2021, at today's TAQC meeting. Once TAQC takes action (anticipated in March 2021) ARC will forward the amendment information to federal agencies for review.

Chairman Armstrong asked if TAQC members had any general questions. He encouraged members to reach out to ARC staff with any detailed questions.

### **3. South Fulton Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)**

David Haynes, ARC, provided a brief overview of Comprehensive Transportation Plans (CTPs). These plans are funded through the region's Surface Transportation funds on a 5-year rolling basis and form the foundation of the region's Long-Range Transportation Plan, identifying local needs, priorities, and future projects. He then introduced Keli Kemp with Modern Mobility Partners to provide an overview of the new South Fulton CTP plan.

Ms. Kemp introduced the project team as well as the public jurisdictions located within southern Fulton County. She provided an overview of the South Fulton CTP and the plan's goal of having a prioritized list of transportation projects that can inform future SPLOST or TIP funding opportunities.

Ms. Kemp provided details on key challenges identified within the plan. Challenges included determining priorities and emphasis areas for local jurisdictions, including connectivity, access, safety, public health, economic impact, etc. Another challenge was how the study accounts for emerging technologies including automated vehicles, smart signals, and vehicle to vehicle communication. She also highlighted ways that the plan addresses varying needs based on corridor types, including route prioritization and context-sensitive design elements. Finally, she discussed railroad corridors and at-grade crossing locations for both access and safety.

Julia Billings, Modern Mobility Partners, continued the presentation with an overview of transit access and conditions within the study area. The plan reviewed transit service and frequency as well as location and quality of transit stops. Ms. Billings provided an overview of how the plan dealt with COVID-19 impacts, including public engagement and local funding uncertainty.

Chairman Armstrong asked if TAQC members had any general questions. John Orr confirmed that ARC is very proud of the CTP program and David Haynes will be providing some updates on local studies at future meetings.

#### **4. Midtown Connector Project**

Chairman Armstrong introduced the Midtown Connector Project (MCP) and Paul Morris, the director of the project. Mr. Morris thanked the committee for the opportunity to present and introduced his co-presenters.

Mr. Morris provided an overview of the project and its purpose to reconnect Midtown Atlanta. The history of this area includes the division of Midtown by the Connector, initially a four-lane parkway and later eighteen-lane interstate highway. The area has suffered from disconnections between the east and west sides of the highway.

He identified three challenges for the project area: Traffic & Safety; Access & Mobility; and Greenspace & Environment. He addressed the narrow “bottleneck” on the highway that encourages weaving maneuvers and increases automobile crashes. The very few bridges over the highway have limited access into the area, especially for people walking, bicycling, and riding transit. Finally, the project seeks to vertically integrate stormwater and vegetation into the area.

The MCP Foundation was formed to advance the vision and analysis of the project. Partners include the Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia DOT, and Midtown Alliance as well as a number of other community leaders and local businesses. The project has identified a number of other peer projects to better understand relatable lessons, including the Klyde Warren Park in Dallas, Millennium Park in Chicago, the Freeway Park in Seattle, and the Rose Kennedy Greenway (the “Big Dig”) in Boston.

The project has developed a detailed examination of the study area and an engineering concept plan. The plan will identify opportunities to reconnect streets east-west and redesign the on and off ramps on the highway. The resulting project will provide a structural foundation above the highway for new buildings and parks. Mr. Morris provided some anticipated benefits of the project for transportation mobility, safety, and access as well as greenspace and environment. See presentation for specific details and drawings.

Mr. Morris concluded his talk and thanked the committee for their attention. Chairman Armstrong thanked Mr. Morris and asked if TAQC members had any general questions.

Jim Durrett, Buckhead CID, asked whether there was a strategy for funding the project, either public or private? Mr. Morris stated that the project cost has been narrowed to a range

of \$800 million to \$1.2 billion. The project anticipates asking state and federal transportation agencies to participate, as well as the City of Atlanta and Fulton County. The project speculates that the Midtown community will form a special funding district, Georgia Tech or the corporate community may contribute, or the philanthropic grant community may support the effort. It is too early to gauge specific levels of interest.

Chairman Armstrong stated that the metro Atlanta region is one that benefits from big visions and huge investments. Doug Hooker, ARC, applauded the project and the funders who have supported the project to date. He echoed that when the region goes forward, we go big and benefit from world-class investments.

Harry Johnston, Cherokee County, asked how long the project may take to complete and whether there wasn't another project to the south anticipating this same effort? Mr. Morris stated that it will take several years to get through planning and funding followed by several years to construct. He clarified that there are several freeway cap projects under consideration, including "The Stitch" in Downtown Atlanta and a similar effort in Buckhead Atlanta. He shared some insight from similar projects in Barcelona, Spain.

## **5. Other and Committee Introduced Items**

Chairman Armstrong asked if there were any other committee introduced topics. There were none.

## **6. Announcements**

John Orr, ARC, stated that the region can anticipate \$36 million in COVID stimulus funding and the ARC staff will continue to work on programming opportunities for those funds. The state DOT will also receive some additional funds.

Mr. Orr also stated that next month, March 2021, will have an action item for the TIP Amendment #2 and requested committee members to attend the meeting to ensure action.

## **7. Adjourn**